DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 470 680 SP 041 180

AUTHOR	Feldman, Jay; Tung, Rosann
TITLE	The Role of External Facilitators in Whole School Reform: Teachers' Perceptions of How Coaches Influence School Change.
INSTITUTION	Center for Collaborative Education, Boston, MA.
PUB DATE	2002-04-00
NOTE	33p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 1-5, 2002).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Attitudes; *Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; *Faculty Development; Instructional Leadership; Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS	*Coaching; *Facilitators (Personnel Development)

ABSTRACT

This paper presents data from an ongoing study of the role of coaches in facilitating whole-school reform, analyzing teacher and administrator perceptions of coaching practices in their schools and how those practices influence school reform. Teachers and administrators from five schools that received coaching from the Center for Collaborative Education completed surveys and interviews, and the coaches kept coaching logs. Data analysis indicated that teachers and administrators saw coaches as playing in important role in effecting school change. Coaches typically worked with teachers during meetings, primarily with academic teams. Administrators reported one-on-one weekly meetings with coaches to help them stay focused. Coaches used a variety of activities, including looking at student work, engaging in databased inquiry and working on the school improvement plan. Coaches focused their work on improving learning, teaching, and assessment, building a collaborative culture, and databased decision making. Two key equity issues considered of low-effectiveness were heterogeneous grouping and exploring equity. Most teachers said coaching led to school and classroom change and had less influence on addressing equity. Barriers to implementing the reform model included lack of faculty commitment, too many initiatives in the school, and lack of understanding of the coaching role. (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 470 680

THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL FACILITATORS IN WHOLE SCHOOL REFORM: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF HOW COACHES INFLUENCE SCHOOL CHANGE

Center for Collaborative Education
1135 Tremont Street, Suite 490
Boston, MA 02120

April 2002

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Jay Feldman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SP041180

THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL FACILITATORS IN WHOLE SCHOOL REFORM: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF HOW COACHES INFLUENCE SCHOOL CHANGE

This is the second in a series of reports that examines the role of coaches in facilitating school change.

Executive Summary

As coaching, or external facilitation of school change, becomes a more widespread strategy for helping schools undergo comprehensive restructuring to create more professional collaborative cultures and to increase student achievement, the need for documentation of effective practices becomes greater. At the Center for Collaborative Education, a model of weekly coaching based on four core school-based practices has developed. The role of the coach was first discussed in a paper examining coaches own perceptions of their role in schools, their relationship building with school staff, their short and long term goal setting, and their beliefs about change. This paper extends those findings by analyzing teacher and administrator perceptions of coaching practices in their schools.

KEY FINDINGS:

OVERALL FINDINGS

- This study provides evidence and examples that teachers experienced more change in school-wide and classroom practice in schools in which teachers understood the relationship between the reform model s vision and the practices used to help schools achieve that vision. Effective implementation of comprehensive school reform occurred when school staff had clear visions of the reform and its implications for teaching and learning.

COACHES ROLE

- Teachers and administrators saw coaches as playing an important role in effecting school change. Teachers were more likely to see coaches effecting change in classroom practices, while administrators viewed coaches as critical friends who could push their thinking about school-wide change.
- Coaches typically worked with teachers during meetings, primarily with academic teams, and as a facilitator who helped set the meeting agendas.
- Administrators reported meeting weekly with coaches one on one to help them stay focused on the 'big picture,' and act as a sounding board and a confidant with whom the administrator could discuss complex issues and push their thinking.
- *These findings are similar to the ways that coaches talked about their role in school, as documented in the first study.*

COACHING ACTIVITIES

- Coaches used a wide variety of activities when working with teachers, such as looking at student work, engaging in data-based inquiry, and working on the school

improvement plan. Teachers felt that most activities in which they were engaged were fairly useful.

- Of the four core practices that comprise the CCE change model, coaches focused their work most on improving learning, teaching, and assessment, building a collaborative culture, and data-based decision making (DBDM), and less so on structural changes (such as heterogeneous grouping or scheduling). *In our first study, coaches noted that they were not likely to engage in DBDM. Coaches use of DBDM has subsequently increased. In addition, coaches noted that they were less likely to focus on improving school structures, a finding which is consistent with teacher and administrator reports.*
- As coaches helped schools to build a collaborative culture, coaches focused on looking at student work and shared decision making, rarely mentioning other key activities, such as peer observation and action research. *In our first study, coaches described focusing on building a collaborative culture as a primary goal. This was an area where teachers and administrators noted change.*
- Two key equity activities were rated as being of low effectiveness (heterogeneous grouping, exploring equity). *In our first study, coaches noted that they were not likely to engage in equity conversations.*

COACHING IMPACT

- Most teachers felt coaching led to school and classroom change, with teachers feeling more strongly that it led to school change. Teachers felt that changes in both school-wide and classroom practice would be sustained over time.
- Teachers felt that coaching had less influence in addressing equity (changes in achievement by group).
- Most teachers believed that the reform model was helping the school, although a significant minority disagreed.
- The relationship between the reform model and the coaching relationship was not always clear, although the administrators had a better understanding of this relationship than did the teachers. *This confirms the finding from the first study that teachers were focused on their immediate, day-to-day needs while coaches reported a challenge of pushing the reform agenda.*
- Teachers experienced more change in school-wide and classroom practice in schools in which teachers understood the reform.
- Teachers and administrators reported a number of barriers to implementing the reform model, include lack of faculty commitment to reform, too many initiatives in the school, and a lack of understanding of the role of the coach.

Two dilemmas for coaching emerged from this analysis. First, teachers experienced more change in school-wide and classroom practice in schools in which teachers understood the relationship between the reform model s vision and the practices used to help schools achieve that vision. This issue of how teachers make the connection between coaching activities, school and classroom practices, and the vision of the reform model has many implications for the coach s work. Coaches need to explicitly link their work to the larger vision, help leadership teams lead the reform effort, and act as vision bearer for the school. In addition, coaches and schools need increased network opportunities to support the reform, through activities such as Critical Friends Group facilitation training, school visits, and role-alike sharing days. The sharing of practices and school visits across the network can increase school staff s

understanding of model principles and practices and help them to develop a vision of what their school could look like.

Second, not all aspects of the reform model are being focused on in coaching. The CCE model is based on four interdependent and connecting practices: improving learning, teaching, and assessment, building a collaborative culture, data-based decision making, and creating structures to support student achievement. This model implies that for sustainable change to occur, a systemic approach to reorganizing and revitalizing a whole school is needed, rather than implementing programs piecemeal. Coaches focused their work most on improving learning, teaching, and assessment, building a collaborative culture, and data-based decision making, and less so on structural changes. Further, coaches often did not use the full range of CCE activities with teachers (e.g., peer observation, action research, equity). In addition to expanding the range of activities, CCE coaches should seek to raise equity more explicitly with teachers, using multiple entry points. Coaches should explicitly point out the connection to equity within each activity they facilitate. For example, reaching all students can be embedded in any coaching activity. In addition, we need to acknowledge the broader context in which coaches work. Coaches have been asked to almost single-handedly facilitate change in a school, yet individual schools are part of a larger system, the district. The reform model must work district-wide to create the conditions within the district that encourage schools to engage in reform.

THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL FACILITATORS IN WHOLE SCHOOL REFORM: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF HOW COACHES INFLUENCE SCHOOL CHANGE

The Context of Whole School Reform

In the current educational policy environment of the United States, Comprehensive School Reform Designs are gaining increasing attention. Since 1997, almost 300 comprehensive school reform providers have emerged, working with over 3,500 schools. Comprehensive school reform is a systemic approach to reorganizing and revitalizing a whole school, as opposed to implementing individual programs piecemeal within a school. An effective comprehensive school reform approach or design uses research to move from fragmented educational programs to a unified plan with a focus on high student achievement. (New American Schools, 2001)

A key element in many such designs is the use of coaches, or people positioned outside of schools who work within them. While educational initiatives have used coaches, also called school change facilitators (Williams 1996), outside reformers (McDonald 1989), and external consultants (Fullan 1991), to effect change since the 1950s (Sulla, 1998), the work of a coach has become increasingly important in helping a school to facilitate and guide a reform process.

Given the increasing use of coaches in schools, it is surprising that little is known about just what coaches do and how they do it. In a previous study of how coaches influence comprehensive school reform (Tung & Feldman, 2001), coaches reported that they play multiple roles in schools. For comprehensive school reform to be effective, coaches must effect change among administrators and teachers, in school structures and decision-making, and in classroom practice. Coaches provide professional development to teachers, work with principals, and create school-wide leadership teams. They most often work with teachers in facilitating cluster meetings--small, grade level teams of teachers--that occur during the school day. In these meetings, teachers look at and discuss student work, design curriculum and assessments, and discuss issues relevant to student learning. Coaches use their external role as a mirror and guide, empowering teachers to make their own decisions about improving their own instructional practice. Coaches envisioned their role as a facilitator of change rather than an expert in the change process. While coaches felt knowledgeable about reform, it was the sense of working with schools to collaboratively effect change that was central to their work.

While this previous study examined coach's perceptions of their roles and activities in school, we know little empirically about how teachers and administrators perceive the reform process, and how teachers and administrators experience the role and work of the coach. Knowing how coaching activities are perceived by school staff can help coaches to better understand how their work effects change in schools. This current study provides a first look at school staff s perceptions of coaching activities.

THE CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE EDUCATION

To best understand what a coach does, it is imperative to understand the context in which a coach works. As in the previous study (Tung & Feldman, 2001), this study examines coaches at the

Center for Collaborative Education (CCE), a non-profit organization whose mission is to work collaboratively with urban schools and districts to improve student learning by promoting and facilitating models of whole school reform. CCE supports approximately sixty schools in New England in the following reform models:

- Turning Points Network, a national middle school reform model. CCE also coordinates the New England Turning Points Network;
- Southern New England Coalition of Essential Schools Network, a regional center of the National Coalition of Essential Schools;
- Boston Pilot Schools, a network of eleven Boston Public Schools with charter-like autonomy;
- New England Small Schools Network, a regional initiative to create small schools in urban districts; and
- Systemic Initiative in Math and Science Education, a network of middle and high schools within the former four networks that are engaged in science and math reform.

CCE CORE PRACTICES

Although CCE works with several networks of schools, the theory and nature of the work is consistent across them. Guiding CCE s theory of change are the empirical work of many researchers and practitioners, including Newmann (1996), Sizer (1991), Levin (1991) and the Carnegie Corporation s report on young adolescent education (1989). CCE's theory is that school change is facilitated by collaborative work with schools in the following four school-based practices:

(1) **Building Leadership Capacity and a Professional Collaborative Culture**: Schools require strong, shared leadership to promote a professional collaborative culture. Schools in which faculty interaction is collegial, and collaborative work is focused on curriculum, instruction, and assessment, have experienced strong improvements in student achievement. This process includes:

- Creating a democratic school community, including shared decision making through a representative
- leadership team and involving all faculties in making decisions about high impact issues affecting learning, teaching, and assessment
- Fostering the skills and practices of strong leadership among administrators and teachers to manage and facilitate change, and to stay focused on teaching and learning
- Establishing regular common planning time to talk about learning and teaching
- Embedding professional development in the daily practices of the school, through practices such as action research to explore important classroom questions, peer observation to promote collegial feedback, and looking at student work
- Building the faculty's capacity to look critically and constructively at teacher work

(2) **Improving Learning, Teaching, and Assessment**: Ultimately, student learning does not increase unless there is a continual focus on setting high expectations for each and every student, and providing ongoing support for teachers to improve their practice of teaching and assessing student learning. This process includes:

- Setting standards for important things that all students should know and be able to do in grade spans

- Creating an explicit goal of closing the achievement gap between white students and students of color, and between low-income and more affluent students, and setting in place instruction and academic support that will achieve this
- Standards-based curriculum development, framed around essential questions, to ensure that the curriculum assists students to meet standards
- Adopting effective, focused approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy to all students
- Promoting habits of mind that create life-long learners and democratic citizens
- Looking collaboratively at student work to assess student progress and improve instruction
- Developing authentic and reliable assessments (e.g., rubrics, exhibitions, portfolios, exemplars), with clear performance criteria, to ensure that students know and can do important things

(3) **Creating Structures to Support High Achievement**: High performing schools create structures that promote the conditions for high quality learning and teaching. This process includes:

- Fostering school cultures of decency, trust, and respect
- Establishing small learning communities with common planning time for faculty teams
- Eliminating tracking and rigid ability grouping (equity)
- Lowering student-teacher ratios (no more than 80:1 secondary and 20:1 elementary)
- Building parent and community partnerships, including greater involvement in decision making and students' learning

(4) **Data-based Inquiry and Decision Making**: Ongoing analysis of data from multiple sources provides a comprehensive picture of a school s strengths and challenges. School-wide participation in this inquiry process results in thoughtful decisions for improvement. This process includes:

- Setting a vision for the school, and what students should know and be able to do upon exiting the school
- Ongoing collection and analysis of multiple sources of data, including disaggregating data by race, gender, and income status
- Analysis of differences between vision and reality
- Inquiry into priority areas for change that most impact learning, teaching, and assessment, leading to identification of causes and development of solutions and a plan of action
- Setting of annual measurable goals for improving learning, teaching, and assessment

GUIDING QUESTIONS

This paper presents results from an ongoing, long-term study of the role of CCE coaches in facilitating whole school reform. In this study, we focused on the following questions:

1) How do teachers and administrators perceive the role of the coach?
2) How often do teachers and administrators work with coaches, and in what contexts?
3) How do teachers and administrators perceive coaching activities as helping to facilitate change?
4) In what ways do teachers see coaching activities as related to the reform model?
5) What barriers do teachers see in implementing the reform model?

Method

PARTICIPANTS

A total of five schools were selected to be involved in this study. Schools were chosen to be a representative sample of all the schools with whom CCE works, as well as a representative sample of the experiences of CCE coaches. Teachers and administrators were interviewed regarding their perceptions of the efficacy of coaching activities. A total of seventy-five teachers and nine administrators were interviewed and completed surveys.

The demographic information of coaches in this study and coaches at CCE is presented in Table 1. Table 2 shows the demographic sample of the schools in this study and of all the schools with whom CCE works. Three of the schools in this study were members or exploring members of the Coalition of Essential Schools Network, including one Pilot School; two were members of the Turning Points Network.

Table 1: Coaches Demographic Information (School Year 2000-01)

	Coaches included in the current study			All coaches at CCE		
	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	2 or more years	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	2 or more years
Experience coaching	3		2	7	3	8
Length of service at CCE	3	2		10	4	4
Length of service at assigned school	4	1		14	1	3

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Schools

	School Level			Geographic Type		
	ES/K-8	MS	7-12/HS	Urban	Rural	Suburban
Number of schools in this study	3	2	0	5	0	0
Number of schools in previous study	4	12	2	15	2	1

DATA COLLECTION

TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEWS

Teachers and administrators in each school were interviewed for 30-45 minutes about their experience of coaching activities during the 2000-2001 school year. A total of 75 teachers were interviewed in groups of 4-10 during their common planning time. Administrators were typically interviewed alone or with another administrator. Nine administrators in all were interviewed. Interviews were transcribed and coded for common themes and challenges.

Teacher and Administrator Surveys

All participating teachers and administrators completed a survey asking them to rate the effectiveness of the coaching activities in 2000-2001. Seventy-eight of the 84 people interviewed completed a survey.

Coaching Logs

Coaching logs from the five coaches in this study were analyzed. Coaches completed a log for each activity in their assigned school, noting who and how many people were involved in the activity, the length of the activity, the type of activity (such as a meeting or classroom observation), the content of the activity (such as planning curriculum or discussing student work), and the resources used, if any.

Over the course of one school year, a total of 91 logs were competed by the five coaches, with a range of logs turned in by each coach from four to twenty-seven. Only one coach submitted less than fifteen logs.

Limitations

This paper reports on the second phase of a long-term study of coaching, focusing on teacher and administrator perceptions of coaching activities and the reform model. The sample used in this study was significantly smaller than the first study. It reports on data collected at only five schools and so is not necessarily representative of all schools that work with CCE. In addition, it provides a broad overview of teachers experiences of three different reform networks that, while guided by CCE s core practices, may differ in implementation. Therefore, care must be taken in interpreting the findings to be representative across the Center s programs. Additionally, the interviews with teachers were group interviews. While researchers took care to hear from each person in each interview, the voices of a few were generally dominant. Thus, school staff s understanding of coaching may not be fully represented in this paper. Finally, this study is a look at teacher and administrator views of a long-term process of reform at a specific and early stage in the process.

Results

We report findings addressing the five research questions using data from qualitative interviews and support these findings with the quantitative log and survey results where appropriate.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: HOW DO TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS PERCEIVE THE ROLE OF THE COACH?

Teacher Perceptions

Teachers viewed the role of the coach as a guide at two levels, in school-wide comprehensive reform and in the classroom. Teachers perceive the coach to be a guiding force who works with school personnel rather than a person who tells people what to do. Teachers spoke of the coach as a facilitator, someone who provides them with the tools they need to be successful.

> Basically, I feel she was guiding us in how to use the protocols in order to look at student work... she was guiding us through that process.

As part of being a guide, teachers at all schools understood the role of the coach as one to raise issues, questions, and problems. One teacher stated:

> She actually brings the problems to the table.

Teachers understood that there were many issues that would not have been discussed without the coach there to raise them. In one school, the coach brought in a "rubric talking about how effective the entire school was in terms of following a style of teaching." In this way, the coach pushed teachers to think about different teaching practices and helped teachers have a conversation about pedagogy that examined where they were most and least effective.

While teachers perceived the coach as a guide, they also relied on the coach s experience and vision of reform.

> Someone who knows what is really practical and what's going to work and not pie in the sky. [I would] probably listen to experienced educators who have been through a lot more and dealt with a lot more issues.

> [The coach] would get a sense of what the purpose [of the conversation] was and then guide it. So I think she brought her expertise to the need being expressed; sort of guiding the school in the course of what they say they want to accomplish.

Teachers perceived this work to be at two different levels school-wide and classroom practice. At two schools, teachers interpreted the role of the coach as a guide in the implementation of comprehensive school reform:

> She does a lot of behind the scenes work and helping people keep the goal of collaboration in mind. And she's helped us stay on that course.

> She knows the whole span of what we're trying to do in becoming a [reform model] school.

In these quotes, teachers recognized the coach's role as leading school-wide reform. While they understood that through the work of the coach they will change, add, and enhance their classroom practice, this was not the primary goal. The coach provides a vision for how schools can function, and helps to both guide the school and develop the capacity of the school to guide itself.

In contrast, teachers at three of the five schools viewed the coach's work as guiding them in developing their classroom practice.

> The coach defines the objectives, implements a plan, and helps you find your way through the plan to reach the objective. And then you teach [in your classroom] what they taught you.

> My understanding is that she was coming here to assist us in finding ways to improve what we were doing here, how we teach, and how we have the students learn.

In these quotes, teachers are expecting to receive from the coach specific, practical suggestions to improve classroom practice.

ADMINISTRATOR PERCEPTIONS

Much like teachers, school administrators also see the coach as a guide. Administrators view the coach as guiding the school through the change process, keeping in mind the larger vision of reform. While administrators recognize that change must occur on two levels--classroom practice and creating a school culture and vision-- they most perceive the coach's role as guiding a whole school change process.

> I think actually creating that shared vision has been part of her role, too. We all have our own little pieces that we're interested in. It might be inclusive education for children with special needs, and it might be multiculturalism, in terms of ethnic backgrounds, and it might be pushing the literacy agenda. She's helped us all see each other's agendas, and share that ownership. I think that's been part of the role, too, getting us to clearly articulate what we want, and see how it fits into the big picture.

> So she keeps us focused on the big picture rather than the details that really hinder everybody. We sort of keep problems in different categories, with the overall picture [in mind]--I think she keeps us focused on that. Insisting that we meet to discuss things and to deal with things helps us. Because you would put that off if you were left on your own, I think.

In addition to helping administrators stay focused on the 'big picture,' administrators also noted that coaches were more than just 'guides.' Coaches developed strong one-on-one relationships with administrators. Acting as critical friends, coaches engaged in deep conversations with administrators. They were a sounding board, a confidant with whom the administrator could discuss complex issues. Coaches worked with administrators more informally and in one-on-one sessions than they did with teachers. Administrators valued this personal relationship because they wanted the coach to push their thinking.

> For me, the word 'coach' doesn't quite do it. Mentor, facilitator. I kept trying to play with what would I think would be a better word, and I didn't come up with any one word, because I do think it's more all-encompassing than what I think of when I just think coach. She very much is a facilitator. She very much is into empowering people to assume leadership.

> I guess a coach for me is somebody who gets to know me, my needs and where I am and where she can support. But also, a coach for me has to have some level of expertise to push me, to hold me accountable and to push me to that next level...I don't just want a cheerleader; I want a coach. A cheerleader is on the sidelines, "rah rah rah." I want the coach to be in the trenches with me and supporting and guiding and helping me do what I need to do. Because [her] responsibility is totally different. ... All [she] can do is give you what support you need to be there, to figure out what's going on, how you can change and what you can do to get you to the goal. But then ultimately, it's up to you to take it and use it.

Further, as much as the coach works with the school, the coach is not an insider. Administrators recognize the benefits of this external relationship.

> By [having the reform model] and the coach coming in, I think sometimes what it does offer us is that outsider who holds the mirror up. Then it doesn't have the same threat ... that there is of it coming from the inside.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: HOW OFTEN DO TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS SEE COACHES, AND IN WHAT CONTEXTS?

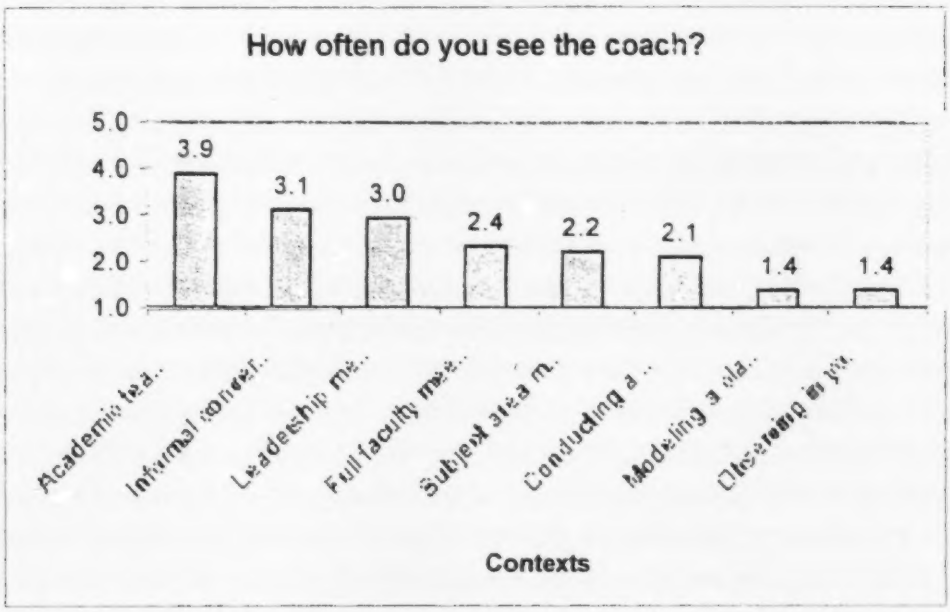
We ask this question in order to understand how coaches structure their limited time with schools.

WORK WITH TEACHERS

Teachers stated that they most often saw coaches during their common planning times, typically a 45-minute period during the school day. In addition, many noted that they occasionally spoke informally with their coach in the school hallways. Teachers at two schools noted working with the coach in after-school workshops, and a few teachers at one school noted that the coach worked with them individually in their classroom.

The interview findings are largely supported by teacher survey results. Figure 1 shows teachers reports of when they work with coaches.

Figure 1: Teacher reports of working with coaches



Scale:
1= Never
2= Occasionally/Less than monthly
3= Once a month
4= Several times a month
5= Weekly

As in the interviews, teachers listed academic cluster meetings[1] and informal conversations as the main contexts in which they work with coaches. Being in the classroom either observing or modeling a lesson was a rare occurrence. Coaches also rarely conducted workshops for school staff.

The third source of data, coaching logs, paints a similar picture. When working with teachers, coaches were in the classrooms of individual teachers only 4% of their time; they were in meetings 86% of their time. They met with clusters 50% of the time, spoke with individual teachers 14% of the time, and conversed informally 11% of the time[2]. Further, three of the five coaches spent over 60% of their time in cluster meetings.

Coaches work with teachers followed a pattern of meeting times. Four of the five coaches used the same pattern of contact with teachers, visiting the school once each week and meeting with teachers during their scheduled weekly or biweekly cluster meetings. At three of these four schools, the coach met with teachers in cluster meetings weekly. In the fourth school, the coach also met with clusters, but

[1] Academic team meeting and cluster meeting refer to a group of teachers who teach the same students and meet together at their common planning time.
[2] We should note that researcher observations of coaches in schools showed evidence of the prevalence of unplanned, one-on-one informal conversations. It appears that because the activity is so frequent, coaches neglect to document it.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

often met with the principal of the school for long stretches and thus did not always meet with clusters regularly, a pattern which frustrated teachers.

At the fifth school, not all teachers met on the same day, making it impossible for the coach to meet with clusters weekly. This coach met with teachers individually. All teachers interviewed saw her monthly, those teachers working more intensely with her saw her weekly. This coach also visited the school more regularly than once per week, but typically for shorter periods of time.

As coaches most often work with teachers in cluster meetings, it is important to examine the coach's role in these meetings. According to coaching logs, coaches were most often the facilitator at these meetings (50%), as opposed to a co-facilitator (6%), participant (35%), or observer (8%). Groups were fairly large; clusters at two schools had between seven and ten members. Some teachers reported that their coach set the meeting agendas, while others reported the coach working with them to create that agenda.

> At the beginning, she came up with the agenda. We had agendas which were followed each week. She would come in with summaries of what we did the previous week and a lot of suggestions that were useful for teaching my class, teaching strategies.

> [She] set the agenda for the next meeting. She would explain to us what we're going to do in the next meeting, and then we would be prepared for her when she got back to us.

In summary, coaches most typically work with teachers in groups, during meetings in which they most often set and facilitate the agenda.

WORK WITH ADMINISTRATORS

At each of the five schools, the coach met with an administrator--the principal--each week, often for an extended period of time, but at least to check in and touch base on a variety of issues. While coaches created a set agenda for their meetings with teachers, they did not do so with administrators. Coaching logs confirmed this finding. Coaches reported that they were facilitators in meetings with teachers 50% of the time, but only 16% of the time were they facilitators in meetings with administrators. While these meetings often had an agenda, the agenda was mutually decided upon or was at the direction of the administrator.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: HOW DO TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS PERCEIVE COACHING ACTIVITIES AS HELPING TO FACILITATE CHANGE?

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF CHANGE: SURVEY RESULTS

Teachers were asked to rate the efficacy of seventeen different coaching practices through a survey. The activities listed on the survey are all part of CCE's whole school change process, and are activities that a coach might have introduced to a school. These activities are also included on the coach log, allowing a comparison between coach and teacher documentation of activities.

Table 3 shows two different ways of examining teacher responses to this survey. First, it presents the average rating of each of the seventeen activities in rank order[3]. Second, it presents the average ratings disaggregated by the number of years the teacher has taught in that school. It also shows the percentage

[3] Average rank was determined by averaging all completed, not blank, responses

of responses that were left blank. In addition, note that a large number of teachers left blank their years in the school (20%).

Table 3: Teacher ratings of coaching activities (1 = not very useful, 4 = very useful)

	All teachers	Years in this School			Percent Responses Blank
Activity	Overall Score	1-9 yrs	10+ yrs	Unident-ified	
Number of respondents	78	41	22	15	
Looking at MCAS[4] work	2.99	3.1	2.6	3.3	14%
Looking at/discussing student work	2.96	3	2.7	3.2	45%
Curriculum mapping	2.92	3.2	2.6	2.9	37%
Assessing school's progress of Model Benchmarks	2.90	2.8	2.9	3.2	44%
Engaging in data-based inquiry to help make decisions around teaching/learning	2.89	2.9	2.6	3.3	18%
Discussing literacy or numeracy	2.89	3	2.7	3	31%
Habits Of Mind	2.88	3	2.4	3.2	45%
Working on the Whole School Improvement plan	2.88	3.2	2.4	2.8	27%
Curriculum planning/development	2.86	3	2.5	3.2	24%
Developing authentic assessments	2.84	2.8	2.5	3.2	27%
Looking at/discussing teacher work	2.81	3.2	2.3	2.8	44%
Exploring issues of equity/expectations for different groups of students	2.77	2.8	2.8	2.7	38%
Scheduling longer/varied blocks of instructional time	2.74	3.1	2.5	2.3	51%
Peer observation	2.71	2.9	2.6	2.6	64%
Action research with colleagues	2.66	2.8	2.6	2.4	59%
Heterogeneous grouping of students	2.63	2.6	2.6	2.7	62%
Reading articles (text-based discussions)	2.54	2.5	2.3	2.9	27%
Average	2.8	2.9	2.6	2.9	

[4] Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System, the state of Massachusetts' high-stakes test.

Coaching activities: How often certain activities occur

While all the activities listed in the table above are potential activities in which coaches could engage, there were a large number of blank responses. The ratings of five activities had at least 44% blank responses[5].

- Peer observation (64%)
- Heterogeneous groupings of students (62%)
- Action research with colleagues (59%)
- Scheduling longer blocks of varied instruction (51%)
- Assessing school's progress of Model Benchmarks (44%)

This high percentage of blank responses may signify that teachers had not engaged in those activities, did not remember taking part in these activities, or did not understand the language used on the survey.

Two other sources of information provide confirmation that coaches do not engage in the above activities very often with teachers. When asked during interviews about the kinds of activities in which they have engaged with coaches, teachers mentioned taking part in the following activities:

- Looking at student work
- Using protocols
- Creating and using rubrics
- Learning facilitation skills (to facilitate the group when the coach is gone)
- Developing interdisciplinary units
- Working on the School Improvement Plan
- Using data to help make decisions

Although teachers did not mention every activity in which they had taken part, it is interesting to note that no teacher mentioned any of the activities with the highest number of blank responses. The combination of survey and interview data suggests that these activities were less likely to occur with teachers.

Second, coaching log data indicates that looking at student/teacher work was the most common activity, occurring 17% of the time (not including looking at MCAS work, which was noted 3% of the time). The other most commonly logged activities included curriculum planning and mapping (14%), data-based decision-making (7%), and discussing equity and expectations (6%). In logs, there were no mentions of peer observation, heterogeneous groupings of students, and scheduling longer learning blocks. There were few mentions of action research and assessing school progress.

[5] Habits of Mind, is the only activity listed that is specific to one of CCE s two comprehensive school reform model, so it is not surprising that so many teachers left this activity blank.

Efficacy of coaching activities

An examination of the overall ratings given to activities shows little variation, as 11 of the 17 activities have an average rating between 2.81 and 2.99. Ratings in this range indicate that teachers agreed that the activities are, in general, useful, but that no one activity serves the needs of every teacher. In addition, there were very few ratings of "1" (not useful') given by teachers, which most likely indicates that teachers found some use in each activity.

There are five potential explanations for why teachers vary in the degree that they benefit from these activities. First, teachers may have different degrees of ownership of the reform, with those having higher ownership more willing to take part in and benefit from reform activities. Second, some teachers may find benefit in those practices they see that relate to the classroom, while others may see the benefit in activities that relate to the whole school. Third, teachers might have prior experience with or knowledge of the activities, or the ideas raised by the activities, that influences their perceived usefulness. Fourth, variation in ratings might relate to how the coach framed the activity and made connections between that activity, their work with teachers and the reform, both in setting yearly goals as well as in the particular meeting introducing the work. Finally, teachers rated seventeen activities, all of which a coach could implement in a school. For a coach visiting a school once per week, and working with teachers primarily within a 45-minute cluster meeting, that is a large number of potential activities. Coaches in general chose to focus on a subset of these activities in their work with schools.

Two of the activities ranked lowest by teachers--action research and peer observation--are activities with high percentages of blank responses, indicating either that teachers do not do the activity that often or that they do not understand the terminology used in the survey. The lowest rated activity, text-based discussions, occurred more often and received far fewer blank responses.

That two low ranking activities were directly related to equity--exploring issues of equity and expectations for different groups of students and heterogeneous grouping of students--is of concern given the model's emphasis on these topics. In a climate where talking about race and class causes discomfort, it might be difficult to frame this issue in a way that allows for discussion within the confines of short cluster meetings. However, coaches may implicitly raise these ideas in their work with teachers, such as through a looking at student work activity.

Additionally, teachers newer to the school (1-9 years) were more likely to rate the activities as more useful than were teachers who had been in the school for a long time (more than 10 years). This finding must be tempered by the high number of teachers who did not provide this identification information, and who also rated the activities higher than did the teachers who had been at the school longer. However, it may be that teachers who have been in a building for a longer time find the work of an external facilitator less useful than do other teachers. They might be less committed to working toward a reform agenda until they see a certain level of commitment to it from the school, district, or state. Alternatively, their experience with other reforms in that school may influence the degree of change they believe a reform can make.

Sustainability of change and coaching activities

Teachers were asked to rate the extent to which they perceived a change in either their own practice or in school-wide practices, as well as whether they agreed that these changes were sustainable or not. Table 4 shows teacher responses to these questions.

Table 4: Teacher ratings of effectiveness and sustainability of coaching activities ("1" = strongly disagree; "4" = strongly agree)

	Effectiveness	Sustainability			
	Average Score	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Work with the coach was effective in influencing my classroom practice.	2.9	17%	53%	28%	3%
Work with the coach was effective in influencing school practices.	3.0	25%	51%	22%	3%
I believe the changes I made in my practice due to my involvement with coach will be sustained.	2.8	17%	52%	25%	6%
I believe the changes my school made due to the coach will be sustained.	2.8	13%	58%	26%	3%
Work with the coach was effective in addressing the achievement of different groups of students.	2.6	13%	44%	38%	6%

As with teacher responses to coaching activities, there is some agreement that coaching activities led to change, both at the classroom and the school level. In general, about 70% of all teachers agreed that coaching activities led to such change, and very few teachers strongly disagreed that they did not. Still, there is a significant percentage of teachers who disagreed with the idea that coaching activities had led to change.

Teachers were slightly more likely to agree that coaching activities affected school change (76% in agreement) rather than their classroom practice (70%). There was no difference in teachers agreeing that they had made changes in their classroom practice (70%) and that those changes were sustainable (69%). This indicates that teachers believe that they will continue to use what they have learned in their work with the coach. Teachers have internalized and taken ownership of changes to their practice. That teachers thought that the school-wide change that occurred was less sustainable (76% to 70%) is also not surprising. In most schools, teachers influence over school-wide practice is less than their influence over their own classroom practice. School policy can be affected by so many outside sources (state or district policy, for example), that teachers may be less likely to believe that changes at the school level will be permanent.

The low ratings (average score 2.6) that teachers gave to coaching activities that addressed the achievement of different groups of students supports the previous finding from Table 3 in which teachers reported that exploring issues of equity or expectations for different groups of students and heterogeneous grouping of students were not useful. Potential explanations for these data include that these coaching activities are not taking place, that they are taking place but not framed explicitly as dealing with equity, that they are taking place but are ineffective, or that teachers are resistant to engaging in these conversations.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

In addition, teachers with different years teaching in the school rated the effectiveness of coaching activities differently. Table 5 shows teachers responses from Table 4 disaggregated by experience in the school.

Table 5: Effectiveness and sustainability of coaching work, by experience ("1" = strongly disagree; "4" = strongly agree)

	All teachers	Years in this School			Percent Blank
Activity	Overall Score	1-9 yrs	10+ yrs	Unident-ified	
Number of respondents	78	41	22	15	
Work with the coach was effective in influencing my classroom practice.	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.9	8%
Work with the coach was effective in influencing school practices.	3.0	3.0	2.9	3.1	12%
I believe the changes I made in my practice is due to my involvement with coach will be sustained.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.9	9%
I believe the changes my school made due to the coach will be sustained.	2.8	2.8	2.8	3.1	12%

Overall, we do see teachers rating coaching practice as useful both in influencing classroom and school practice, as well as sustaining those changes. The pattern of less experienced teachers seeing the activities as more useful than did more experienced teachers (as found in Table 3, usefulness of coaching activities) does not hold in looking at effectiveness and sustainability. Teachers with less experience in the school (1-9 years) see more change in the school and in their own practice, just as they saw coaching activities as more useful to their practice. However, there is no correlation between experience in the school and how sustainable teachers see this change. Further, teachers who did not identify their years in the school rated change and sustainability higher.

TEACHERS' AND ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTION OF CHANGE: INTERVIEW RESULTS

Teachers at each school listed a number of changes made in their school as a result of their work with their coach. Each of the changes described relates to one or more of CCE s four core practices. We present these interview findings grouped by each core practice.

Building Leadership Capacity and a Professional Collaborative Culture

According to CCE s Theory of Change, schools require strong, shared leadership to promote a professional collaborative culture. Schools in which faculty interaction is collegial and collaborative work is focused on curriculum, instruction, and assessment have experienced strong improvements in student achievement. Changes reported by teachers that helped schools build their capacity included a focus on using a collaborative culture to accomplish school-wide goals, increased collaboration among teachers, and building facilitation skills among staff.

- Teachers at one school explicitly stated that their goal as a school is to create a collaborative culture, and that each activity that the coach is conducting helps the school develop its capacity in this area. For example, teachers believed that the coach was instrumental in bringing the idea of Habits of Mind to the school, and in facilitating the process at the school.

> Teacher A: I had a sense that [the coach] knew that she wanted to get us to the point of finishing those Habits of Mind. Now, it's clear that that's what we were going to work on through the year, and I feel like we did establish that; we got through all the different meetings, we had the process, and we got to that result.
> Teacher B: And I think the work next year is about connecting that to our language and our teaching practices, strategies. Through her modeling, I feel like that's definitely true, like that she's kind of setting the stage for that.

- One school believes the coach helped them to collaborate more strongly as a staff.

> [At] the last in-service, the other schools commented about [our] staff afterwards. Because a really interesting phenomenon happened... I had asked something [very specific] about best practices. One of [our] teachers says, "Well, in her class, I see this and this and this happening." And suddenly all the teachers were talking about each other's classrooms, and what they had observed. I thought that was very different. I would not have seen that happen probably two years ago, or even last year, as much.

- Teachers in two schools felt more comfortable and competent in facilitating meetings. In one school in its third year of working with CCE, teachers believe the coach helped them reach a "better position to function when our grant ends. Not that we want our coaching to end, but we should be able to move along with collaborative meetings.

Improving Learning, Teaching, and Assessment

CCE s theory of action is that, ultimately, student learning does not improve unless a continual focus on high expectations for each and every student is sustained. The reform revolves around providing ongoing support for teachers to improve their practice of teaching and assessing student learning. Coaches facilitated this school-wide change through a number of activities:

- Developing whole school improvement plans
- Implementing school-wide improvement of students writing using a school/city/state writing rubric. Through emphasis on the writing process, coaches helped teachers elicit more detail, use an edit and revision process, and the majority of the students were stating their main idea and giving two to three supporting details with a closing.
- Data-based decision making for the development of writing rubrics.
- At one school, teachers said the coach helped the school to 1) develop their school s Habits of Mind, 2) start a school-wide leadership team, 3) use protocols, and 4) collect data through surveys.
- Helping with classroom practice by modeling in the classroom. As one teacher said:

> She just came that one time, took those three to four children, and did that little writing assessment with them. The next writing assessment we did as a class, that small group was much better. So it's more beneficial to have someone like that come in during classroom time than to even just tell us what to do and we go back and apply it. Because I actually got to see her do that.

Not surprisingly, more schools made changes in this core practice than in the other core practices. Improving teaching, learning, and assessment is at the heart of a teacher s work,

appears more relevant to their day-to-day needs, and is more within their own ability to control the change and sustainability of the change than the other core practices.

Creating Structures to Support High Achievement

CCE believes that schools need to create structures that promote the conditions for high quality learning and teaching. Work by the coach to help schools develop these structures included:

- The coach at one school helped create common planning time for teachers; the other four schools had common planning time in place.
- The coach at three schools helped to develop and build capacity in the Leadership Team.

Schools did not talk about other structures, such as eliminating tracking and rigid ability grouping, lowering student-teacher ratios, or building parent and community partnerships.

Data-based Inquiry and Decision Making

CCE s fourth core practice involves ongoing analysis of data from multiple sources to provide a comprehensive picture of a school s strengths and challenges, with school-wide participation in this inquiry process resulting in thoughtful decisions for improvement. DBDM is the process by which school staff set a vision, collect and analyze data, identify the difference between vision and current practice, set priorities for change, and identify measurable goals. DBDM can be done by individual teachers and at the school-wide level. Coaches helped schools engage in this process through looking at student work and school-wide action research projects:

- Through a process of looking at student work, a coach helped one cluster s teachers to identify writing weaknesses and to define their goals and objectives for improving writing.

> Teacher A: [The coach helped us] establish strategies for writing key questions and develop rubrics to make sure that it was very clear to the student what is expected of the student, which was not just useful for writing, but in other activities, such as home economics.
> Teacher B: I thought her job was to help us to have a uniform way of identifying problems with teaching and learning, so that all of us would use the same strategies to solve the problem in every classroom...using the protocols to identify needs, and then to come up with the same strategies so that we were all on the same page with our teaching and learning.

- Two schools developed their decision-making ability as a school.

> I think there's been a great surge this year in trying to involve teachers, I guess, on the first level of decision-making. So we get all involved, and do a lot of critical looking at things and talking about things. Because I think they want everyone to be part of the process.
> Teacher

> I think [the coach's] role is to develop leadership skills and to sort of make sure we remember that it's about us and our school, and to empower us to be decision makers.
> Administrator

- One school engaged in a school-wide action research project that contributed to a policy shift in the school. The coach facilitated the collection of data, the identification of focus areas, and the implementation of resulting actions.

> [Our coach] collected data, and facilitated our data collection. For the first time ever in this district, we actually met with every grade level team to go over results, and kind of do some data-based inquiry around it, and see if we could pull patterns out of it, in terms

> of finding strengths and areas that we needed to really focus on. She made up a little worksheet for us to use in groups, and we sat with teams and sort of facilitated that process. Initially she modeled it for [the principal], and then I sat in some without her, and conducted some of them. Then she took all the data and helped to kind of really analyze it and look at it more, and sat down with us again afterwards. We're using some of our decision making around in-service for next year also. What came out of it is that writing and articulating what children needed to do was an area that hurt our scores across grades, and across subjects. So, for example, even with math, any of the areas that were open-ended questions, open-response questions, we needed much more. We found certain patterns in certain grade levels.

Teachers discussed using data in two ways--at a school-wide level, to make whole school policy decisions, and at the classroom level, such as the team of teachers using looking at student work to help them define goals and objectives and change their classroom practice. Underlying the use of data was the sense of empowerment that went along with looking at evidence and having a say in decision-making.

RESEARCH QUESTION 4: IN WHAT WAYS DO TEACHERS SEE COACHING ACTIVITIES AS RELATED TO THE REFORM MODEL?

In this section, teacher and administrator perceptions of how coaching activities relate to the whole school reform model are examined.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COACHING ACTIVITIES AND REFORM MODEL: SURVEY RESULTS

As seen in Table 4, most teachers generally agreed that coaching activities resulted in sustainable change in their school. A sixth question asked teachers to rate the effectiveness of the reform model in helping the school to implement change. Table 6 shows their responses to that question (in bold-face) in the context of the previously reported questions.

Table 6: Usefulness of Reform Model in Implementation of Effective Practices ("1" = strongly disagree; "4" = strongly agree)

	Average Score	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The reform model in our school is helping us to implement effective practices.	**2.8**	**12%**	**62%**	**22%**	**4%**
Work with the coach was effective in influencing my classroom practice.	2.9	17%	53%	28%	3%
Work with the coach was effective in influencing school practices.	3.0	25%	51%	22%	3%
I believe the changes I made in my practice is due to my involvement with coach will be sustained.	2.8	17%	52%	25%	6%
I believe the changes my school made due to the coach will be sustained.	2.8	13%	58%	26%	3%
Work with the coach was effective in addressing the achievement of different groups of students.	2.6	13%	44%	38%	6%

Teachers perceptions of how the reform model impacts change were similar to their expectations of the effect of coaching activities on change. In general, most teachers agreed that the reform model is helping their school to be more effective, but there were a significant number of teachers who disagreed. The high numbers of teachers who disagreed (26%) on this

question, as well as teacher responses to other questions on the survey, indicates that some teachers have questions about the relationship among coaching activities, change, and the reform model. More teachers were likely to strongly agree that the coach, rather than the reform model, contributed to school change.

Relationship Between Coaching Activities and Reform Model: Interview Results

While the general consensus among school staff is that coaching activities are somewhat useful to classroom practice and school-wide change, the relationship between the coaching activities and the reform model is less clear. This is not to say that teachers had no understanding of the model, because many teachers in fact do understand parts of the model. Teachers understood a concrete aspect of the model those aspects relating to their classroom practice, to literacy--that can be directly applied in their classrooms. For example, some teachers have gained useful classroom strategies introduced through the reform model.

> We incorporate most of the methods, like reading aloud, modeling, all those methods. We do that every day in all of the lessons.

> We have a rubric that says you have to have the "word wall" and ... our graphic organizers...

The teachers who stated that they understood the model saw the work of the coach as moving towards a vision. Teachers at one school demonstrated a clear understanding of the model, naming the model and its principles during interviews and seeing the school s work as building a professional collaborative culture. The teachers at this school saw the coach s separate activities looking at student work, creating Habits of Mind--while important in their own right, as steps that led to this vision.

In contrast, teachers in most schools did not express much knowledge of their respective reform models. Teachers at these schools did not mention any of the Principles of either model, such as whole school collaboration or creating school-wide leadership teams. At each of these four schools, there were differences in how the majority of the teachers perceived the model. In one school, teachers thought the coach was working with them to implement their district s reform principles. At another school in the same district, teachers equated the coach *with* the reform model. That is, teachers saw many initiatives in the school, and referred to the coach as the [reform model] person. The third school recognized that they were members of the particular reform model network, but saw the model as one of many initiatives at the school. Few teachers saw it as an umbrella structure; many saw it as a competing initiative with others. At the fourth school, teachers confused the roles of two coaches and two initiatives.

Model cohesiveness

The main issue raised by teachers was that they did not have an overarching vision of the reform model or its place in their school. They discussed how difficult it has been for them to understand the model and how it affects their whole school. One teacher, who seems to have an understanding of the model, stated:

> I've been having a hard time, over these two years, trying to understand exactly the whole thing. I think I have it, and then I don't. But I'm getting a sense that [the reform model is] in the background, pushing toward all of this, getting us to get this all done...it all kind of is under the same thing.

For others, the competing demands on their time and the number of initiatives and programs in their schools hindered their embrace of the reform models. One teacher, responding to this pressure, said I still have real issues with everything being cohesive.

This teacher, and others, had difficulty understanding the big picture of reform in her school, in seeing how her school was changing, and of knowing the relationship between the model and other initiatives in the school. Reasons for this difficulty included the multiple initiatives going on in the school and a lack of clarity in the process.

> I think one of the dilemmas of our school in general is that there's too much on our plates. I feel that if we were more clear of a few priorities, [the coach] could be more effective, too, that she could really help us stay the course on the one or two or three things, rather than having to come in and kind of weave through it to ... help us.

Administrators understanding of the reform model

Partly due to their differing access and relationships with coaches, teachers and administrators had a differing view of the reform model. Typically, administrators have a better understanding of the model and how the model will help implement change. They see the reform as including both structural elements in the school as well as changing classroom practice. Administrators are also familiar with the jargon of the reform. However, administrators are quite often still learning. One administrator found the summer workshops to be a means to learn about the model. Another administrator stated:

> This is my first year as a principal at a Boston Public School. I have not been part of a Turning Points school [and did not] know anything about Turning Points. But I really believe in the middle school philosophy and the way to organize, to deal with children at this stage...But I can't comment on the influence of Turning Points because I didn't go to a Turning Points indoctrination and now I see it. I basically have read what's on my shelf and then I've worked with [the coach].

While administrators have a better sense of the larger picture and of the reform model, it is important that the coach continue to work with the administrator to keep developing their understanding.

RESEARCH QUESTION 5: WHAT BARRIERS DO TEACHERS SEE IN IMPLEMENTING THE REFORM MODEL?

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF BARRIERS TO REFORM

Teachers mentioned five barriers in how coaching activities and the reform model could affect change in their school. These barriers include time, multiple initiatives, productiveness of meetings, commitment to the process, and change in coaches.

The barrier mentioned most often by teachers in all study schools was lack of time, specifically a *lack of time to have productive meetings*. Teachers felt that they did not have enough time to meet during the day, and, during meetings were unable to fully concentrate on the task at hand because they would shortly be working with their students.

> Just the time being in middle school like this. It's like being shot out of a cannon. There's literally more to do than there is the time to do it. We sit here, now, every one of us, although there's only a week and a half left [of the school year], there's still a million things you have to do. So we're talking to you but we're also watching the clock, because it's going to be post-time in about 10 minutes.

A second barrier to reform was that teachers were overwhelmed by too many initiatives, a theme discussed in the section discussing teachers understanding of the reform agenda. Without an understanding of how the reform model gives cohesion to multiple strategies for change, teachers feel pulled in many directions. Additionally, some initiatives are not aligned with Turning Points or Coalition of Essential Schools, such as standardized testing. Many teachers felt responsible for teaching students to succeed on high stakes state tests and this conflicted with time spent on reform model activities.

> We have the MCAS on our back at a constant level. And I'm not saying that if it wasn't the MCAS, it wouldn't be some other test. But there's only so much time to do so much, and [even with this new curriculum we work on with the coach], the reading department is going to give them [tests] at the end of every unit, [because] the city demands that they give X amount of reading inventories.

Other teachers had difficulty keeping track of all the initiatives in their school. Teachers could not keep track of the big picture and follow the impact of their school s reform work.

> I think as a school we're trying to do too much. That's why we're all confused.

> We do a lot of surveys, and nothing happens. That's why I'm one of the people that's really frustrated with it. I don't know where this stuff goes, and then we never hear anything.

A third barrier is that teachers do not always see the usefulness of their work with the coach. Many teachers tired of meetings and found them difficult to accomplish meaningful work.

> I'm frustrated with the meetings, but I've gotten a lot from [the reform model].

> In doing all this, because I teach in Spanish and my writing is basically in Spanish, looking at student work within the team is not helpful to me.

Other teachers raised the concern implicit in the second quote. The barrier, however, is not what the teacher raised--that the student work was not in Spanish, or about math--but instead in helping teachers make connections between whatever work they are looking at and their own practice.

In addition, teachers of certain specialized programs in the school, such as bilingual or special education, do not feel a part of the reform process.

> Something that might be taken into consideration when in any school that has a bilingual program, to make it more useful for us to get together.

A fourth barrier is questionable commitment to the reform model. Even among teachers who felt that they had benefited greatly from the model, there were issues of concern. Teachers in one school were worried that their principal was not fully committed to the process.

A fifth barrier is the lack of continuity and longevity of coach-school pairings. Teachers felt that coaches should work with the school for as long as possible and over multiple school years if possible. Doing so would make the process more seamless.

> A challenge we had at the beginning of the year is that the staff got so used to the coach last year and they were expecting that coach back and all of a sudden they see a new person. So it sort of started the whole process all over again. Even though they knew what they had to do and what the person was here for, it's just a different style, a different approach, and it took them a while. So the fact that we didn't have consecutive years of the same person made it difficult.

However, when teachers were discussing this issue, they believed that a change in coach would be good if they did not feel their coach was providing the appropriate service to the school. Teachers were unsure of how coaches were assigned, or reassigned, to schools. At the very minimum, new coaches and former coaches must communicate about the previous coaching and reform work in the school prior to the new coach entering the school.

Administrator Perceptions of Barriers to Reform

Administrators agreed that time and the change in coaches from year to year were barriers to fully implementing the model. However, administrators addressed two other concerns not raised by teachers.

First, administrators recognized that coaching can only be so responsive to their school s individual needs. One school s administrator raised the idea of flexible time and thought coaching would be more effective if the coach attended the school on a different schedule, when most needed.

> It's one day a week. Our staff development, when I really have access to my staff, is on Friday afternoons. So not having flexibility because [coaches] also have commitments elsewhere. It's not like I can say, 'Okay, you come two hours during this day and two hours this day', because still that's not very effective.

The administrator realized that asking a coach to be at the school for multiple days a week for a small number of hours was not feasible. However, this quote raises the question of what is the most productive use of a coaches time in a school. It also suggests a re-examination of the one day a week coaching model.

Second, administrators understand that the process of change takes more than three years, and they worry about what happens when their three years of support are completed. They believe sustainability can not be achieved in three short years.

> The whole process of change, and how it happens in facilitation, three years isn't long enough. Five years would be much better.

Discussion

This study is the second of a series of studies examining the role of the external coach in facilitating school reform. As coaching becomes a more widespread strategy for helping schools undergo comprehensive restructuring to create professional collaborative cultures and improve student achievement, the need for documentation of effective coaching practices becomes greater. The first study examined coaches own perception of their role in schools, their building of relationships with school staff, their short and long term goal setting, and their perceptions of change. This paper seeks to extend those findings by analyzing teacher and administrator perceptions of coaching in their schools.

Overall, faculty and administrators in schools believed that the CCE reform model effected change in both school and classroom practices. Teachers and administrators viewed coaches as playing an important role in this process. Both saw coaches as guides for change at the school-wide and classroom levels. Teachers were more likely to see coaches effecting change in classroom practices, while administrators viewed coaches as critical friends who could push their thinking about school-wide change.

Teachers reported that they worked with coaches mostly during meetings, primarily with academic teams, and rarely in classrooms. During these meetings, coaches typically acted in a facilitator role and helped to set the meeting agendas. Interestingly, teachers with less than 10 years experience found coaching more useful than more veteran teachers. Administrators reported meeting weekly with coaches one on one to help them stay focused on the 'big picture,' and act as a sounding board and a confidant with whom the administrator could discuss complex issues and push their thinking.

When working with teachers, coaches used a wide variety of activities, such as looking at student work, engaging in data-based inquiry, or working on the school improvement plan. Teachers felt that most activities in which they were engaged were fairly useful. Of the four core practices that comprise the CCE change model, coaches focused their work most on improving learning, teaching, and assessment, building a collaborative culture, and data-based decision making, and less so on structural changes (such as heterogeneous grouping or scheduling). As coaches helped schools to build a collaborative culture, coaches focused on looking at student work and shared decision making, rarely engaging faculty in other key activities, such as peer observation and action research. Two key equity activities were rated as being of low effectiveness (heterogeneous grouping, exploring equity).

A significant majority of teachers believed that the reform model was helping the school, although a substantial minority disagreed. Teachers felt that the changes in their school and classroom practices would be sustained over time, feeling slightly more this way with classroom practices than with school-wide changes. Teachers felt that coaching had less influence in addressing equity (changes in achievement by group).

Teachers experienced more change in school-wide and classroom practice in schools in which more teachers understood the reform model and its vision and practices. Teachers and administrators reported a number of barriers to implementing the reform model, including a lack of faculty commitment to reform, too many initiatives in the school, and a lack of understanding of the role of the coach.

DILEMMAS AND IMPLICATIONS

Two main dilemmas emerged from this research. This section will discuss both dilemmas, focusing on their implications on the reform model implementation and coach practice.

Dilemma #1: Teachers experienced more change in school-wide and classroom practice in schools in which teachers understood the relationship between the reform model s vision and the practices used to help schools achieve that vision

Coaches viewed the reform model as an overarching vision that could guide schools in the reform process. Indeed, in the three schools in which a large number of teachers made the connection between the coach s work in developing the school culture, the reform model vision, and classroom practice, teachers noted changes across multiple core practices. In the other schools, change was effected only in the core practice related to classroom practices.

In interviews, while many teachers supported the reform model and its coaching activities, many teachers reported that they did not have a global vision of the reform model or its place in their school. They did not perceive the reform model as an overarching program guiding their work, but rather as competing with other initiatives, while others were unclear as to the purpose of the reform. Some teachers thought of the reform model as just another initiative because the coach would be leaving after three years when the funding was over.

When staff have a broad understanding of the reform model and the role of the coach, school-wide change, in addition to changes in classroom practice, occurred more often. This issue of how teachers make the connection between coaching activities, school and classroom practices, and the vision of the reform model has many implications for the coach s work. This section now explores implications of this finding at three levels: the role of the reform network, the role of coaching activities, and the role of the coach.

THE FUNCTION OF THE SCHOOL REFORM NETWORK

Increasing Network support

Although each school in a reform model is a part of a network of schools, and each network sponsors sharing meetings and summer institutes, both of which provide reflective and collaborative time for school teams, there was no mention of the role of the network by school staff. The network may look to provide more activities such as Critical Friend Groups facilitation training, school visits, and role-alike sharing days. Through sharing of practices and school visits across the network, school staff can increase their understanding of model principles and practices to develop a vision of what their school and the reform model could look like.

An observation of a summer institute for one of CCE s reform models gives one clue. On the morning of the second day, a teacher commented on having an a-ha moment. This participant said that while she had been in a coached school for two years and had learned from her school s coach, that she finally got it and understood what the coach was trying to help the school accomplish. In the subsequent discussion of this change in understanding, teachers talked about a need for regular time for focused reflection, planning, and collaboration. This vignette points

to the fact that teachers get it at different times, and in different ways. Perhaps this teacher may not have reached her level of understanding at the Institute without having been coached for two years. It also points to the need for teachers to have the time to reflect, and raises the issue of whether focused time away from the pressures of schools is required.

Given that some teachers get it , what role might these teachers be able to play in helping other teachers understand the reform? While coaches work with all teachers in the school, should more emphasis, in terms of support and training, be placed on helping some teachers to develop the skills to model or lead for their colleagues? Should more emphasis be placed on training teachers to be school-based coaches or facilitators in different aspects of the reform model?

HOW CAN A COACH HELP TEACHERS UNDERSTAND THE REFORM VISION

It is clear that without a vision of reform, teachers will continue to perceive coaching activities as isolated activities. The challenge for the coach is to help teachers create goals specific to their needs and related to the reform model and to create plans for how those goals can be achieved. What processes and conditions enable teachers to develop understanding of the reform model and its relationship to coaching activities?

Helping schools understand the reform model s vision and practices once they join the network
When schools choose to adopt a school reform model, they become members of a larger network of schools that have also adopted that model. In the adoption process, all schools are required to go through a learning process about the reform model and all are expected to have a full faculty vote to determine whether to adopt this model. A premise of this process is that schools would have some understanding of the vision of the model, and of how that model can help improve the school, before making a decision. School staff need to understand the reform model if they are to take ownership of the reform.

However, most schools that adopt a reform model, even though they undertake a conscious exploration and buy-in process about adoption, still have little understanding of that model when they join. Consequently, this places a large burden on a coach to explain the model within the constraints of their one-day-a-week visit to the school, working with teachers in short, 40-45 minute cluster meetings. Their initial weeks of coaching could focus on orienting faculty to the reform model, its roadmap, and their relationship to coaching activities.

Coaches can explicitly link their work to the larger vision
Given that coaches work so often with teachers in cluster meetings, how might these meetings be used to make connections to the larger vision and work of the model? Coaches should be more transparent in how their activities fit in with the larger vision of the reform model. Coaches can reference activities to the model s principles and roadmap, regularly assessing progress in relation to the model s benchmarks.

Helping leadership teams lead the reform effort
One goal of CCE s reform model is to create a leadership team that has authority to work with the principal and facilitate the change process. A functioning leadership team is necessary to help schools develop a collaborative culture and to create a level of discourse in which schools can openly and honestly discuss the important educational issues facing the school. School

leadership teams seem to be well suited to help teachers see the link between classroom and school-wide change. Leadership Teams can be the go-between between the coach and the school staff. It could be their role to ensure that staff understand the reform model and how the school and model s visions interrelate. Further research must examine how these teams evolve and what role they play in CCE network schools.

Just as working with teachers in short 40-45 minute cluster meetings limits the coach s ability to create deep conversations, so too working with the leadership team in their once or twice a month meetings limits the teams development. Creating a functioning and sustainable leadership team is difficult. More emphasis may need to be placed on developing the capacity of leadership team members to effect change. Although many leadership teams do receive training outside of the school day, this is not currently a formal aspect of the CCE model.

THE COACH'S ROLE

Coaches as critical friends

Teachers, administrators, and coaches (see Tung and Feldman, 2001) hold similar views of the role of the coach. All described coaches as facilitators of reform, as bringing expertise to the reform model, and as using their expertise to empower teachers to make decisions. Administrators also saw the coach as a critical friend, someone external to the school who can act as a sounding board and a confidant. Administrators found the coach to be important in helping them to fine-tune and implement a long-term plan in the school. It is not surprising that teachers did not describe their relationship with coaches in this way, given the greater numbers of teachers in a school, and that coaches most often work with multiple teachers during cluster meetings, during a set time of the day.

Aspects of the coach-administrator relationship that led to the development of a critical friend relationship can be applied to the coach-teacher relationship. One reason that coaches and administrators are able to develop into critical friend relationships is that both parties own the agenda. Creating shared agendas with teachers is a goal, but one which involves a developmental process. It is critical that coaches be more transparent about the goal and the process to lead teams through this evolution.

Coach as vision bearer

While coaches have been described by school staff as facilitators and critical friends, perhaps the most important role of the coach is that of vision bearer of the school. It is the coach s responsibility to point out the larger picture of reform and to make connections between practice and vision. Teachers ability to improve and sustain the changes in their classroom practice is dependent on the school implementing change across all four of CCE s core practices. When the relationship between classroom practice and school-wide change is made, when school staff believe that effecting school culture impacts classroom practice, schools are more likely to change in multiple areas. The challenge for coaches is to help teachers understand this link.

Dilemma #2: Not all aspects of the reform model are being focused on in coaching

The CCE model is based on four interdependent and interconnecting practices: improving learning, teaching, and assessment, building a collaborative culture, data-based decision making,

and creating structures to support student achievement. CCE believes that for sustainable change to occur, a systemic approach to reorganizing and revitalizing a whole school is needed, rather than implementing programs piecemeal within a school. There are three key findings that inform this dilemma:

First, of the four core practices that comprise the CCE change model, coaches focused their work most on improving learning, teaching, and assessment, building a collaborative culture, and data-based decision making, and less so on structural changes. Besides working with schools to create common planning time, coaches did not engage in other structural change conversations with schools, such as having schools schedule longer blocks of instruction time or examining groupings of students.

Second, coaches often did not use the full range of CCE activities with teachers. For example, when working with schools on their collaborative culture practice, coaches focused on looking at student work and shared decision-making, rarely mentioning peer observation and action research.

Third, two key equity activities were rated as being at low levels of implementation and effectiveness. Teachers reported that coaches were less likely to work with schools around creating heterogeneous groups of students and in exploring equity and expectations for different groups of students.

These findings lead to four implications for coaching practice:

INTRODUCE ALL OF THE CCE CORE PRACTICES OF THE MODEL INTO THE SCHOOL

School reform is a multifaceted task; there are many complexities inherent in trying to implement all four of CCE s core practices in schools. In general, implementing all four core practices into the school means that coaches are using all possible avenues to promote school change. Coaches were less likely to work with schools on creating structural changes than on attempting to improve teaching and learning. However, there are multiple ways that coaches can support and improve teaching, learning, and assessment practices through structural change. For example, coaches can work to create 50 to 1 student loads for teachers through two-person teaming, which would allow teachers to personalize their instruction and give them more time to provide students written and oral feedback. Examining student groupings provides opportunities to address teacher expectations of students and increase achievement of low-income, Black, and Hispanic students. Thinking about the interdependence of the practices allows coaches to help schools create widespread change at both the classroom and school-wide levels.

USE THE FULL COACHING TOOLKIT

The high percentage of activities with blank responses on the teacher survey indicates that coaches were not using their full tool kit in their work with teachers. By not using the full range of resources available to them, coaches limit the ways they can guide school change. Using a broader range of activities allows for school staff to (1) have more and different kinds of conversations, (2) reach their goals through multiple pathways, and (3) be more likely to link classroom practice and school-wide vision. For example, engaging in looking at student

work an activity used often by coaches--allows for teachers to discuss classroom practice. However, peer observations an activity not often used by coaches allows teachers to observe each other s practice and reduce teachers feelings of isolation.

REDOUBLE THE FOCUS ON EQUITY USING MULTIPLE ENTRY POINTS

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing educators today is to create and sustain high-quality educational environments for low-income students and students of color. Consequently, a focus on equity must be a basis for discussion of any school reform. While this is a much talked about topic, in this study, teachers reported that coaching had less influence in addressing equity and that exploring issues of equity or expectations for different groups of students and heterogeneous grouping of students were not useful.

There are several possible reasons for this perceived lack of focus on equity. It may be that these coaching activities are not taking place, that they are taking place but not framed explicitly as dealing with equity, that they are taking place but are ineffective, or that teachers are resistant to engaging in these conversations. It is unclear from the data collected for this study which reason is most valid.

Because equity is so critical to ensuring the success of all students, coaches must raise equity more explicitly with teachers, using multiple entry points within each activity they facilitate. Often, equity discussions need to occur in longer periods of time, particularly when first developing a common language and identifying the equity concerns in the school. Finding this time for discussion is critical to making progress in this area.

WORK AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

By its very nature, change is innovative, and innovation is difficult. Coaches have been asked to almost single-handedly facilitate change in a school, yet individual schools are part of a larger system, the district. For coaches to more easily be able to make innovations within individual schools, districts must support, and indeed encourage and expect, such changes. Coaches by themselves do not typically have time for work on the district level, and so the reform model must work to create the conditions within the district that encourage schools to engage in reform. For example, the district could give the school control over early release and other professional development days to ensure that the coach can help the school implement professional development that best meets its needs.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: The Role of External Facilitators in Whole School Reform: Teachers' Perceptions of How Coaches Influence School Change	
Author(s): Joy Feldman and Rosann Tung	
Corporate Source: The Center for Collaborative Education	Publication Date: April, 2002

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

☒

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) *and* paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

☐

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

☐

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature: Joy Feldman	Printed Name/Position/Title: Joy Feldman, Director of Research + Evaluation	
Organization/Address: CCE 1135 Tremont St. Boston, MA 02120	Telephone: 617 421-0134	FAX: 617-421-9016
	E-Mail Address: jfeldman@ccebos.org	Date: 8/28/02

Document at www.ccebos.org

(over)

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education
Box 40, Teachers College, Columbia University
New York, NY 10027

Telephone: 212-678-3433
Toll Free: 800-601-4868
Fax: 212-678-4012

WWW: http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Telephone: 301-552-4200
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-552-4700
e-mail: info@ericfac.piccard.csc.com
WWW: http://ericfacility.org

EFF-088 (Rev. 2/2000)